

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Chairman, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Chairman, I am happy to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI).

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Chairman, as a past NSF grant recipient, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1867, the National Science Foundation Reauthorization Act of 2007. I want to thank Chairman GORDON, Chairman BAIRD and Dr. EHLERS for their work in bringing this strong bill to the floor today.

Today, we stand at the cusp of numerous technological breakthroughs that will completely revolutionize our way of life; from hydrogen and other advanced fuels technologies that will free us from our addiction to oil, to nanotechnology that has the potential to impact virtually every sector of our economy.

Much of this research has been made possible by grants from NSF, and by passing this bill we are continuing our support of American researchers, scientists, engineers, educators and students who will ensure that these breakthroughs continue and that America continues to lead the world technologically and economically.

I would like to point out that consideration of this legislation comes on the heels of last week's passage of the 10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds and Sowing the Seeds legislation. Both of these bills were introduced in response to the recommendations of the Rising Above the Gathering Storm report, which was commissioned by Congress to help the U.S. compete, prosper and be secure in the global community of the 21st century.

This legislation we are considering today, which puts us on a path to double NSF funding over 10 years, will further build our commitment to competitiveness, being led in the House by Chairman GORDON.

The NSF has a broad mission of supporting science and engineering and funding basic research across many disciplines. Basic research is very necessary, yet oftentimes, because it does not directly, only indirectly lead to advances, does not receive private funding. The NSF does this.

This legislation also specifically calls on the director of NSF to give special consideration to research proposals having high importance for future national economic competitiveness. This is critically needed.

One example is nanotechnology, a very promising field of research that has the potential to revolutionize our society from defense to health care to energy to environmental cleanup. This will help.

The bill also gives special consideration to partnerships between academics, industrial scientists and businesses. I have spoken to a lot of professors and administrators at universities who say this is a major problem in our country of taking research and getting it to the market, and this will help to do this.

Mr. Chairman, earlier today I had the opportunity to meet with five American scientists who each just recently won a Nobel Prize. They all emphasize that continued support of the NSF is crucial to America's future success, just as it is critical to their successes.

So, as a proud cosponsor of this bill, I urge the House to heed the advice of those on the cutting edge of science and take another step in bolstering American competitiveness by passing H.R. 1867.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Chairman, it is a real privilege and honor to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON), Chair of the committee. Before he speaks, I just want to say what a privilege it is to serve with him and to offer that years from now, there will be Americans benefiting from technological and scientific innovations and in particular young people, scholars, benefiting from the education initiatives championed by Mr. GORDON. They may not know of the work done. He has done a great job, a bipartisan approach to this committee. It is a privilege to serve with him.

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Mr. Chairman, I thank Dr. BAIRD.

Let me just say that I have a 6-year-old daughter at home, and I am very concerned that she could be a part of the first generation of Americans to inherit a national standard of living less than their parents, a complete reversal of the American Dream. And if we are going to avoid this, it is very, very important that we follow through on the recommendations of the report on Rising Above the Gathering Storm.

Now, last week we did. We got a good start. Last week, we passed the K-12 improvements in math and science education, as well as investments in our education system in other regards. This week, we are going to take another step forward, and that is follow the recommendations of increasing our commitment to basic research.

Tonight, we are going to pass the National Science Foundation authorization which will double the National Science Foundation. Tomorrow, we are going to double the NEST budget.

Let me on behalf of my daughter, I want to thank Dr. BAIRD, I want to thank Dr. EHLERS and our excellent staff for working together in a bipartisan way. I want to remind everyone that this is a bill that came out of the Science and Technology Committee unanimously because it is a good bill, it was worked on together in a bipartisan, Democrats, Republicans, with a very good staff. Again, I thank you for the great work you did, and my daughter thanks you even more.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2007. I appreciate the kind words offered by Mr. BAIRD and Mr. GORDON, and frankly, producing this bill was a lovefest. I am

very impressed with the work they did on it. I am very appreciative of the very hard work that they did in putting together a bill, including direct interaction with members of NSF, talking to scientists who were familiar with the NSF, scientists who had received funds from NSF, and out of all that, we have written a bill that I think is a very good one.

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My colleagues and I on the Science and Technology Committee have introduced a strong reauthorization bill for the National Science Foundation. It is a straightforward 3-year bill which provides authorization for the various research and education activities of the National Science Foundation.

I am pleased that this bill establishes a pathway to double the total budget of the Foundation. In 2002, Congress wholeheartedly supported a 5-year doubling path for the Foundation, and I strongly supported that and was very pleased to vote for it.

Unfortunately, appropriations have fallen far short of that target. Last year I had consultations with the President, and partly as a result of those consultations, the President introduced a plan known as the American Competitiveness Initiative that sought to double the research budgets of the National Science Foundation, National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Department of Energy's Office of Science over the next 10 years. In other words, twice as slow as the previous decision of the Congress.

I would prefer the faster increase, but I recognize realities and the tough financial conditions we have. So I am pleased to sign on with doubling over 10 years.

The National Science Foundation was included in the ACI because it conducts world-class research in areas that support new, innovative technologies, which, in turn, lead to advances in telecommunications, homeland security, alternative energy and other areas of great importance to our Nation.

I have the utmost confidence that the National Science Foundation will use the authorized funds in the most prudent manner, as NSF consistently earns the highest possible score in the annual Office of Management and Budget ratings of financial and budget performance.

The National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2007 will support the education and training of more than 225,000 scientists, engineers, teachers and students. In addition to discipline-specific research, NSF activities include cross-cutting initiatives on nanotechnology, networking and information technology, climate science change and the International Polar Year.

It also supports the construction of major research facilities that are shared within and across many disciplines of the scientific community.